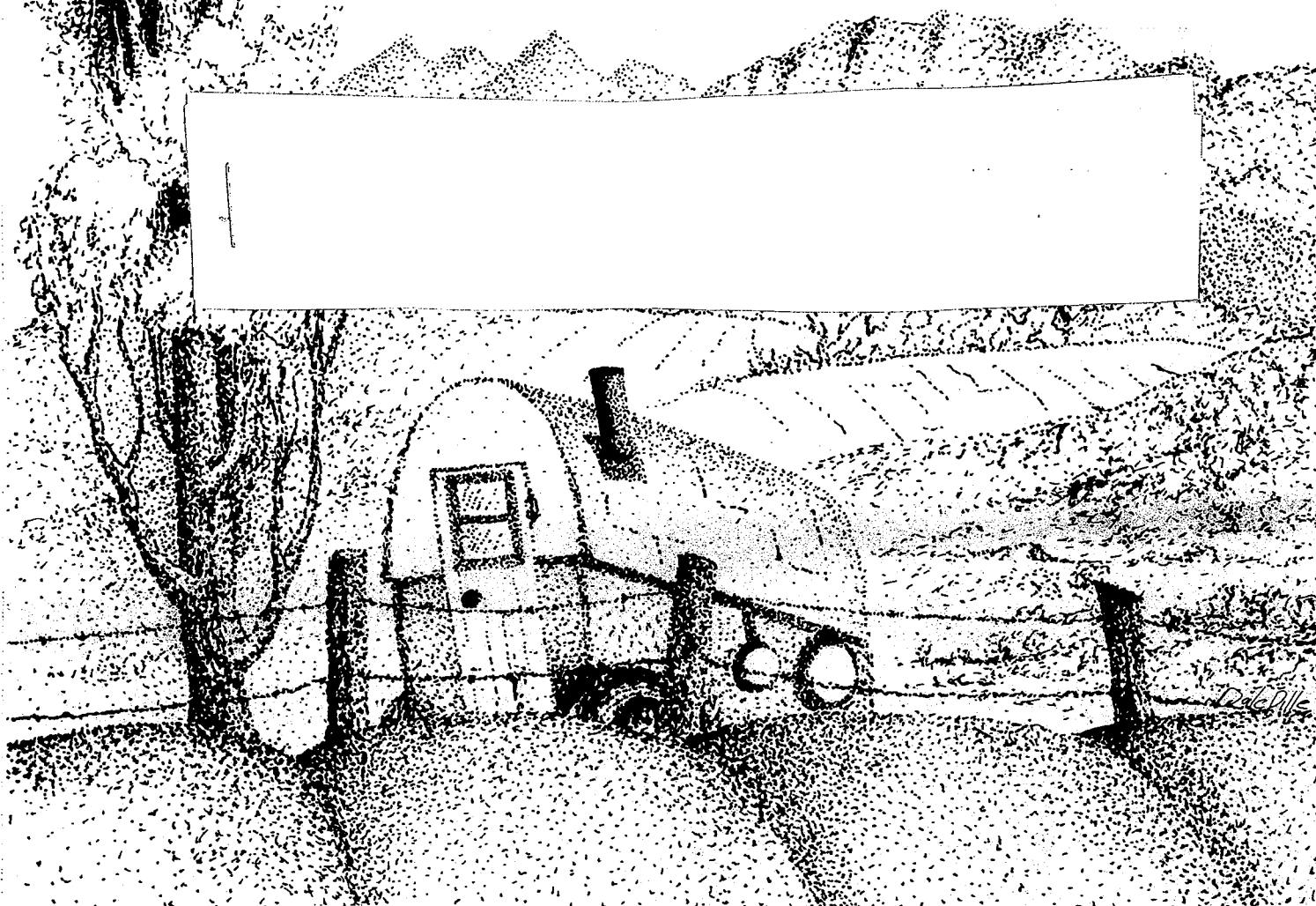
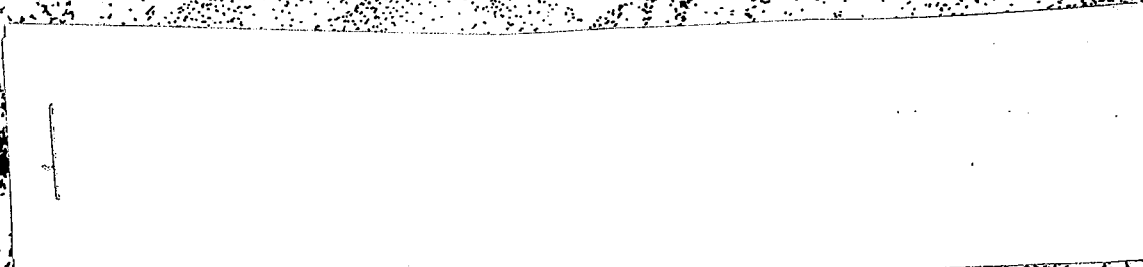


MONUMENT

PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SHOSHONE DISTRICT IDAHO
December 1984





IN REPLY
REFER TO: 1601

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Shoshone District

P.O. Box 2B

Shoshone, Idaho 83352

December 21, 1984

A copy of the proposed Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is enclosed for your review. The EIS analyzes four RMP alternatives, and one sub-alternative, for managing the public lands in the Monument Planning Area. The proposed Monument RMP is a modified version of Alternative C presented in the draft Monument RMP/EIS distributed in May 1984. Public comments on the draft were considered in preparing the proposed RMP and final EIS.

This document is divided into three parts separated by colored dividers. The first part is the proposed Monument RMP. Next is the final EIS. The last part contains appendices, a glossary, references, an index, and maps. I hope this format will make the document easy to read and use.

This is not a decision document. The decision on the action to be taken will be based on the analysis in the EIS, BLM's workforce and budget constraints, and public comments. A record of decision will be prepared and distributed when a decision is reached.

Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by approval of the Monument RMP may file a protest. Specific requirements for protests are discussed on pages 1 and 2 of the proposed Monument RMP under "Protest Provision." Protests should be filed with the Director (202), Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. Any protest on the Monument RMP must be filed by February 4, 1985.

Note that recommendations on wilderness study areas may not be protested since BLM and the Secretary of the Interior are merely making recommendations to the President. A separate final EIS will be prepared for wilderness recommendations made in the Monument RMP.

I thank you for your interest and participation in BLM's planning process.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Haszier
District Manager

PROPOSED MONUMENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

and

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Prepared by
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Shoshone District


State Director, Idaho

PART I

PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN



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PREFACE

CHANGES

Many changes have been made between the draft Monument RMP/EIS and the proposed Monument RMP and final EIS. The major changes are summarized below.

Format

The proposed Monument RMP has been pulled together in the first part of this document distinct from the final environmental impact statement (EIS). It is separated from the EIS by a colored divider. This has been done to allow the reader to examine the proposed RMP without looking through many sections of the EIS and appendices to pull the pieces together. Minimal reference is made between the proposed RMP and the final EIS. Although some duplication has resulted from this format, the added reader convenience is worthwhile.

The appendices have also been separated from the final EIS by a colored divider to help the reader find sections of interest more easily.

Italics

Changes made to the text have been italicized to help the reader distinguish the changes more easily.

Transfer Areas

The number of acres available for transfer have been increased in Alternative B. This is in response to new proposals received since the draft RMP/EIS was printed and some agricultural and occupancy trespasses that were inadvertently overlooked when the draft was prepared. The net result is an additional 1,715 acres considered for transfer in Alternative B.

Changes Transfer Areas

The number of acres available for transfer have been decreased in Alternative C. Although some areas were added to a transfer category because of the reasons described above, many areas were deleted from transfer categories. The primary reason for deleting areas from transfer was public comment regarding wildlife habitat. Over 1,100 acres were added to L11, Isolated Tracts. Nearly 2,200 acres considered potentially valuable for pronghorn winter habitat were removed from the transfer category. The net result is 2,158 acres less considered for transfer in Alternative C.

The changes in transfer acreage have affected the estimates of effects on livestock grazing, wildlife populations, and economics.

Wilderness

Appendix F, Detailed Discussion of Areas Being Studied for Wilderness, has been deleted from the final EIS. A separate final wilderness EIS will be prepared for the suitability recommendations made in the Monument RMP. It will contain a detailed analysis and rationale for the suitability recommendations. All individuals and organizations on the Monument RMP mail list will receive a copy of the final wilderness EIS.

Livestock Stocking

The livestock stocking level has been changed in each alternative. The minor changes in stocking level for Alternatives A and D are also due to errors in the draft. For Alternative B, the stocking level is 123 AUMs lower than in the draft because of the greater acreage in a transfer category, and because of inadvertent errors in the draft. For Alternative C, the stocking level is nearly 1,900 AUMs lower than in the draft, even though 2,158 acres less is considered for transfer. This is due primarily to an error in the draft.

Vegetation

The cheatgrass/fire interrelationship is explained in more detail in the final EIS in response to public comments.

Threatened and Endangered Plants

The discussion of threatened and endangered plants in the final EIS includes new information obtained since the draft was prepared.

Soils

The discussion of soils and soil erosion has been expanded in the final EIS to better explain the erosion situation in the planning area. This has been done in response to public comment.

Wildlife Habitat

The effect of the management actions in Alternative C on wildlife populations has been changed slightly. This is because less acreage is included in a transfer category and more acreage is included in the Isolated Tracts program.

The percentage of T2, Transfer-Agricultural Entry, lands that could be retained and managed as L11, Isolated Tracts, has been increased from 15 to 25 percent. The discussion of riparian habitat has been expanded. The "trigger level" for monitoring big game populations on winter range has been lowered from 30 percent decrease to 15 percent decrease. These changes were made in response to public comment.

Lands for Local and State Government Needs

A phrase has been added to the description of T2, Transfer-Agricultural Entry, areas to make these areas available for local and State government needs. This was done to ensure that these areas could be considered for sanitary landfills, parks, or other facilities.

Areas of Geologic Interest

A total of 1,675 acres has been added to the Areas of Geologic Interest shown on Map 8. This was done to include the unique features around Sand

Changes

Areas of Geologic Interest

Butte in response to public comment. In addition, approximately 220 acres encompassing Sand Butte would be closed to ORV use to protect unique geologic features in Alternatives C and D if Congress does not include the Sand Butte WSA in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Economics

The discussions of economics have been expanded to include an estimate of the effects on existing farms of developing new farmland and the effects on electricity costs of removing water from the Snake River Plain Aquifer for irrigation. This was done in response to public comment.

Public Participation

Chapter 5 has been expanded to include public comments on the draft RMP/EIS and BLM's responses to comments. Chapter 5 has also been updated to include public participation activities that took place after the draft was prepared.

Other

Numerous other minor changes have been made to correct data errors, oversights, and typographic errors in the draft and to clarify sections of text that may have been misleading.